

Notes for Fall 2005 IHCA meeting held in Anchorage October 26-27

In attendance: Steve Frenzel, USGS; Larry Standley, BLM; Joe Klein, ADF&G; Rick McClure, NRCS; Larry Rundquist, NWS; Christy Miller, ADCCED; Jeff Hock, ADEC; Dave Mierzejewski, DOD-ACOE; John Trawicki, USFWS; Jon Zufelt, DOD-CRREL; Ann Puffer, USFS

Guests: Kenton Taylor, Taunnie Boothby

Action items from Spring meeting were reviewed:

- ARLIS has not cataloged IHCA records—nothing has been added since ca 2001
- Joe Klein and John Trawicki may have some records that aren't at ARLIS
- Jon Zufelt has some meeting notes that should be posted on the web site
- Christy Miller may have notes too

ACTION: John Trawicki will get previous secretary's notes to take to ARLIS by or at next meeting

ACTION: Amend the Spring meeting notes to add to the rationale for holding this meeting in Anchorage was to reduce travel costs

UPDATES ON LEGISLATION

John Trawicki provide an update on pertinent Federal legislation

A copy of S. 1338 (Alaska Water Resources Act of 2005) will be added to the minutes

Steve Frenzel distributed a copy of a letter from Congressional Subcommittee on Water and Power to the Secretary of Interior and Director of Office of Management and Budget—letter requests large increases in the National Streamflow Information Program and Cooperative Water Program

Christy Miller will provide a letter from NGOs supporting the streamgaging program

Christy provided an update on S. 49 (to establish a Floodplain Erosion and Mitigation Commission). Because Interior was opposed to the bill, Senator Stevens may withdraw it and introduce similar bill in Commerce (NOAA)—may include role for the Denali Commission

There are a number of funding bills for erosion/relocation studies (for Corps)

No update on State legislation

DNR may be raising fees to file for an instream flow right

OLD BUSINESS

TP47 update: Larry Rundquist handed out project history

AWRA sent initial letter to the Delegation in 2004 with a follow-up letter in July 2005.

NWS asked by Sen. Murkowski to respond (latest in September 2005) and they are working on a response

Larry provided background of need for update and AWRA letter to ASCE, Jon Zufelt will check on having ASCE draft letter of support to delegation—economic benefit of having good data for design work

IHCA letter to Gov. re: FERC gaging requirements

Joe Klein may propose new draft letter—recommend hydrologic data be collected in advance of small (<5 Mw) hydro projects

Maybe a letter should be sent to someone other than FERC (RCA?)

Legislation has not been drafted for small hydro so it may be too early for a letter proposing changes

Decided not to send letter unless someone had specific information on a FERC policy change related to stream gaging in Alaska.

Interagency Flood Data Sheet—Rundquist has not been getting submissions from the agencies

Ground water data collection standards—no update

Climate Reference Network—two stations installed this summer, now have four in Alaska—Larry provided handout

FEMA map modernization underway for Anchorage, Juneau coastal flood study (new data), Aniak DFIRM is in review, scoping meeting for Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Mat-Su Borough, Anchorage (Girdwood)

Fairbanks priority is on south Fairbanks, then Chena, last Salcha

Mat-Su may be next after Fairbanks

State under contract w/FEMA to update maps for nine small communities (new topo—2 ft elev)

Corps is updating topo and hydrology for floods on Anchor R., Kenai R., and Deep Creek

Discussed whether an Ex-Chair executive report was necessary or were meeting notes good enough. Conclusion that bullets of significant events, posted on web site, would be good.

The stream restoration/bioengineering group will jointly meet with AWRA in January 2006, Bill Rice is the contact

Jeff Hock described the relation of ACWA to Federal resource agencies

ADF&G, DNR, DEC are State agencies w/habitat, water quality, and water quantity interests

Last June DEC completed creation of an online database of 350-400 water bodies and agency ranking scores

Water Experts Group (WEG) will train agency staff how to use the automated system—only certain parts of system will be publicly accessible

Land management agencies are informally consulted when a water body on their land is nominated—Federal agencies would like to be consulted before a stream is formally 303d listed

Update on HUC codes: 130 of 133 4th field areas have had 5th or 6th field HUCs completed by BLM

All NHD stream layers will be done early next year

Janet Curran provided an update on the Interagency Restoration Committee for Alaska

At this point mostly a networking opportunity for professionals in the field

Water and Restoration Conference at Anchorage Sheraton Inn Jan 23-27;

abstracts are due at the end of November

AGENCY REPORTS

Most agencies had sent electronic versions of reports in prior to meeting. The electronic reports will be posted on the web and content not discussed in detail in meeting notes.

CRREL

Jon Zufelt handed out CRREL's report and discussed content

Installed thermistor string at Shishmaref to investigate whether permafrost can be frozen back in winter

COE

Dave Mierzejewski did not hand out Corps of Engineers report

Rock work at Shishmaref is done, relocation is going slowly

Kivalina: 2 of 3 storms in past year caused lots of erosion

Newtok: more proactive in relocation, want to trade land on Nelson Island with USFWS

Unalakleet: minimal erosion, some coastal flooding

Corps to start flood frequency analysis for Unalakleet

Still working on mouth of Chester Creek (railroad)—possibly 2 years until construction

Eklutna watershed study about to start, may use N¹⁵ in sediments to determine magnitude of historic fish runs

Need to know sediment quality behind old dam if removal is considered

Mendenhall & Duck Cr nothing happening

Streamgaging program last year was cut by \$17K

Dropped Lisky's Crossing (Kuskokwim)

Added Chatanika

Put in a \$600K request for streamgaging related to Hubbard Glacier/Russell Fiord

Put in a \$500K request for streamgaging in northwest AK

Hoping to do a physical model of Upper Cook Inlet

Kenton Taylor provided some background on the North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI)

Focused on development issues of broad scope—both on & offshore

Lack of good hydrologic information for North Slope

Web site is www.northslope.org

USFS

Ann Puffer handed out the Forest Service report

A 20 percent cut is projected for 06 and 07

Currently working on the streamgaging agreement w/USGS

Increased focus on watershed restoration

Would like Wildland Fire web link to go on IHCA web site

NRCS

Rick McClure handed out detailed report, which covered most of discussion

Several new personnel have joined NRCS staff in Palmer, some from internal relocations

Seven new radio telemetry sites installed last year, five in Prince William Sound

NWS

Larry Rundquist handed out detailed report, which covered most topics not previously discussed by Larry

Snow River Jokulhlaup seems to have started last week—last one was Nov 03

Some discussion of NWS observers daily stage reading in comparison to USGS continuous record (stage/discharge)

BLM

Larry Standley handed out detailed report, which covered activities of State office, as well as Anchorage, Glennallen, and Fairbanks field offices

Nourse Lake glacial moraine dam was determined to be stable—no ice core

Jon Kostohrysis retiring in December, but plans to publish “Water Resources of Nome Creek” before then

USFWS

John Trawicki handed out detailed report

Budget doesn't look good—eliminated 15 positions in Refuges in last few years

Bill Rice (hydrologist) is now with FWS in Ecological Services

Refuges lost two hydrologists

Kodiak gages should run through 2007

USGS

Steve Frenzel handed out brief report showing number and average costs of streamgages in 2005

Also discussed that a number of projects were completed in 05

Financially OK, but not great—potential for a 20 percent cut in Co-op dollars next year

Plan on maintaining six percent annual increase to all customers

DCCED

Christy Miller handed out detailed report for Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development

Flood insurance studies were previously discussed

DCCED is actively involved in work at Shishmaref

Some localized flooding (Alakanuk, Emmonak, McGrath) last year caused economic damage to these areas

Reiterated UAA Coastal Erosion Workshop will be held in Anchorage January 4

ADEC

Jeff Hock handed out a lengthy report and discussed upcoming meetings for review of water quality standards & mixing zones

Numerous ACWA grants were awarded for SFY06 and were identified in the report

Discussed variability of bacteria data

ADF&G

Joe Klein handed out report and discussed items shown in report

Some new high level staff

Fishing fees going up

New hatcheries proposed—one in Fairbanks one in Southcentral

Sustainable salmon funds are getting earmarked and little is left for discretionary work

Working on instream flow educational products

Lots of comments received on proposed permitting process for small hydro

No reports from: AK ARNG, DNR, DOT

Update from UAA: Bill Schnabel working on bacteria study of University Lake; Lee Ann Munk working on Prince William Sound mine runoff

Taunnie Boothby (ADCCED) was introduced—working with Christy Miller

Extended discussion on USGS streamgaging costs—Steve Frenzel explained that as costs increase and Federal funds stay flat or go down all the increase is borne by the cooperator. In the NSIP program we must drop gages to deal with cost increases.

Emphasized the value of the network in addition to individual gages and the priority on NWS forecast points for Federally funded gages.

ASCE monograph on cold regions hydrology was sent out earlier in pdf—current state of the practice—augments previous monograph (1990)

Handout describes proposed chapters, asking for input, get comments to Jon Zufelt (include additional topics and potential authors)
Draft planned for next July—publication in about 2 years
Corps of Engineers Ice Engineering Manual covers many of the same topics and is a good resource

NEW BUSINESS

None

Spring meeting 2006 to be held in April, this time in Juneau to hopefully pull in more State people
Action: Send information on availability for meeting in April to Jeff Hock